

Jim Doyle
Governor

Roberta Gassman
Secretary



State of Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development

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Secretary Gassman Awards Injury Prevention Grant to SynergyHealth-St. Joseph's Hospital and LindenGrove, Inc.

Governor Doyle's *Safe Lifting Initiative* will help health care workers avoid back injuries

Waukesha – Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced that SynergyHealth-St. Joseph's Hospital and LindenGrove, Inc will receive \$40,000 in grants for projects to help prevent worker injuries. The grants are part of Governor Jim Doyle's *Safe Lift Initiative* to help nurses and other health care workers avoid injuries when moving patients.

"St. Joseph's and LindenGrove perform valuable services in meeting health care needs of area residents, including older adults" Secretary Gassman said. "This grant will help the employees provide essential care by preventing injuries on the job. Health care workers can suffer serious back injuries when moving patients, which can end careers and undermine patient care."

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, six of the top ten occupations at highest risk for back injuries are in health care. Depending on the severity, such injuries can sideline workers temporarily or end their careers entirely, increasing the cost of worker's compensation and health care overall. The risk of injuries can also discourage others from nursing or other health care careers.

Governor Doyle developed the *Safe Lifting Initiative* as part of Grow Wisconsin, his comprehensive plan for economic and workforce development. A total of \$325,000 in federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) money is funding the demonstration projects.

The demonstration projects were selected with guidance from the Select Committee on Health Care Workforce Development. The committee's mission is to identify and help implement top-priority, immediate and long-term strategies for addressing the health care worker shortages in Wisconsin.

St. Joseph's Hospital is an 80-bed, non-profit, acute care hospital serving residents of West Bend and the greater Washington County area. The hospital will receive \$20,000 to train 403 employees on proper use of safe lifting equipment.

LindenGrove, Inc. has multiple locations throughout Waukesha County and is a not-for-profit organization of care facilities, which focus on the needs of older adults. LindenGrove will receive \$20,000 for training 512 employees.

The two projects are in collaboration with the Washington, Ozaukee and Waukesha Workforce Development Board.

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